



The Virginia Saltwater Review

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by

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OVERVIEW



As we move into the summer months, some familiar friends begin returning to the area. Kingfish (also known as whiting or sea mullet to some anglers) have made a presence in Chincoteague, Onancock, and the piers. The red drum bite is red hot around Fisherman's Island, and cobia have returned to our waters. However, the star of the show this week has been the impressive catches of speckled trout caught



around the Chesapeake Bay and in North Carolina. Jerry Thrash of Queen's Creek Outfitters provided us with some pictures of just a few of the citation speckled trout from this week.

Many local tackle shops and marinas are looking forward to the upcoming break in the wind so that anglers can get out there and fish. As the recent storms push through, many areas are expecting a big fishing weekend!

We're almost there! Cobia have just arrived in the area, and the cobia tournament is right around the corner. Next weekend is the 13th Annual Jimmy Roger's Hampton Creek Cobia Tournament, held at the Hampton Piers in the downtown waterfront district of Hampton (June 13 and 14). Last year the VMRC Biological Sampling Team examined over 30 cobia during the tournament, collecting length, weight, and sex information, as well as removing otoliths from the majority of fish to determine the age. This year, the Biological Sampling Team will again be present, examining each fish for the tournament committee and collecting vital biological information on cobia. Remember, for every cobia provided to the sampling team during the tournament, you will receive either a reward shirt or hat.

Red drum data are still needed! We collect length data from red drum that anglers catch-and-release. In 2009, there will be a coastwide (Virginia to Florida) stock assessment of the red drum population, and information is lacking on the catch-and-release of red drum outside of the management slot limit (18 to 26 inches). You can provide length and location information through the Virginia Saltwater Fisherman's Journal (www.vasaltwaterjournal.com). See page 9 for general details about the website.



THE FISHING REPORT

Chincoteague

The fishing has changed little over the past weeks at Captain Bob's. Kingfish have turned on, and the best bait has been Fishbites synthetic bait (the bloodworm variety). Most kingfish have been found in the inlet near marker 15. A few nice drum are still coming in from the surf, as well as kingfish, skates, and a rare flounder. Shark can be found on the north side of the Queen's Sound and the Assateague Channel. When the wind allows, some anglers have been catching flounder, but the throwback ratio is high. Nice bluefish were found near the mouth of the inlet and a few at Queen's Sound, and snapper bluefish were hooked near the inlet—Donna reports that's a good indication of good tuna fishing to come. No one was able to get out offshore all week because of high winds and seas.

Wachapreague

At the Wachapreague Marina, good fishing can be found in the inlet. Last week, a 7-pound flounder was weighed in, and staff has heard reports of several keeper flounder. A 23-inch grey trout was also landed. Offshore, the wind has kept most boats inshore; however, there are reports of nice catches of black sea bass on the wrecks when boats can go out.

Staff at Captain Zed's report that anglers are still doing well with flounder. Last week, the reported throwback ratio was 10 undersized fish to 1 keeper (19 inches or greater). In the surf at Paramour Island, nice red drum are being hooked. A few offshore boats have done well with black sea bass at the wrecks this week.

Cape Charles

The black drum run has slowed at Chris's Bait and Tackle. However, while there were no reports of black drum this week, there were several release citations for red drum caught near Fisherman's Island. An 8-pound grey trout was weighed in at the shop this week, and croaker were reported from Morley's Wharf in Exmore. Cobia have begun to show as well—a few cobia up to 35 inches were reported near Middle Ground. At Kiptopeke State Park and the Cape Charles Pier, anglers are getting bluefish and small grey

trout off of the pier after dark under the lights

Staff reports little action from Cherrystone Bait and Tackle. Croaker are biting, and the occasional flounder is hooked. There have also been reports of lingering black drum catches in the lower Chesapeake Bay.

Onancock

Captain Wil of Onancock reports that the rain has been too heavy to go out much over the past week. When fishing is possible, the catch has changed little since the last publication. Sea mullet are showing well and in the shallows, and undersized flounder, small trout, and a few spot have been reported. Limited striped bass are also available. Poor weather and windy conditions have made for poor fishing conditions.

Lower Bay/Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel

Several red drum release citations were reported from Cobb's Marina. On the 29th, anglers Roy McCausey and Ralph Crowder hooked 46.5-inch and 47 inch red drum, respectively, aboard the REEL NAUTI. Other reports include a few flounder found in the area and striped bass landings at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

According to Cindy at Sunset Boating Center, a few black drum are still being hooked. Nice striped bass were found this week between the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel and the Monitor Merrimac Bridge Tunnel. There were also large croaker and flounder; however, most of the flounder was too small to keep.

Staff at Salt Ponds Marina reports catches of flounder, spadefish, and rockfish in the area. So far this week, no citations have been reported.

Several red drum release citations were reported from the York River Fishing Center; the largest was 52 inches. All were caught at the high rise by anglers Jerome Alvis, Joe Berberich, and Michael Bowler. Angler Andrew Brown brought in a 6-pound, 5-ounce speckled trout caught from the Ware River, and Man McGee reported a 24-inch speckled trout release, also from the Ware River. Croaker are still being caught throughout the area and at the Gloucester Pier.

Ken Neill, reporting secretary for the Peninsula Anglers Club, contributed the following:

Offshore fishing is very good right now from Hatteras to Virginia Beach. Out of Hatteras, boats are encountering great dolphin and billfish action. Out of Virginia Beach, there are dolphin and a good tuna bite. Oregon Inlet is in-between so they have some of everything. It is a good time to call your favorite charter captain and head offshore. Bottom fish are available out there but with the pelagic action, not as many are fishing for them. They will still be there when the tuna, gaffer dolphin, and billfish stop biting. Inshore, a lot of flounder are being caught, but most are too short to keep. The Cell-buoy 42 area was probably the best area for keepers this past weekend. Spadefish are being caught at the Chesapeake Light Tower, the Cell, and at Wolftrap Light. The bite has not been red hot. Water temperatures are moving up this week so that should help turn them on. Good numbers of big black drum continue to be caught. The red drum bite is on fire. Large reds are being caught around Fisherman's Island and the Inner Middle Ground Shoals. The cobia bite has turned on which has everyone excited. Numerous citation-sized fish have been caught over the past few days. The

best areas have been off of Grandview to York Spit Light on the western side of the bay.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

The weather is warm and the fish are here, so it's time to bait up and hit the water. Anglers mostly continue to chase very cooperative red and black drum while awaiting the spadefish bite. The spades are here and schooled around most usual locations, but have yet to launch into their typical early feeding explosion. These fish are still holding tight to structure, with most fish averaging below five pounds. A few incidental catches of big spades have angler's hopes up, such as the impressive 9-pound, 13-ounce spade caught by Leo Olivarez of Virginia Beach while casting a swimming lure intended for bluefish at the 3rd island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel this week. The drum on the other hand, are still imparting great catches along the Eastern Shore shoals, with the area south of Fisherman's Island, near buoy 10 still the most popular spot for both reds and blacks. Some boats are releasing more than a dozen fish in one outing lately.

Cobia catches are becoming more prevalent as these covert fish make their way to the spawning grounds. Linda Wright of Seaford had a good day when she hooked the first large fish of the season while fishing near York Spit Light. Her brute tipped the scales at 64-pounds. Many of the biggest fish will come from off the Grandview, Back River, and Buckroe areas early in the season. Live eels, croaker, and cut bait works well this time of year.

Flounder pounders are sifting through many shorts to get their bounties, but a few bigger fish are rounding out some catches. Folks are still working the inlets for the best chance of landing keepers.

Smaller grey trout are available around the Concrete Ships, the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel and Sewell's Point, as well as a few decent flounder up to 21-inches. But the best news about the grey trout is the debut of larger fish at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Chris, at Chris' Bait and Tackle, reports that grey trout ranging to around eight pounds are hitting grubs around the northern span of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Joseph E. Hudgins, Jr. of Chesapeake scored with the new state leading grey trout when he hooked a nice 9.5-pound specimen while working the 4th island area.

CAPT Steve Wray of Long Bay Pointe Bait and Tackle reports that striped bass up to 32 pounds are still hitting live bait over the tubes and along the pilings of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, especially at the curve approaching the 3rd island.

Pier anglers along the ocean front are picking through small flounder, small croaker, and Taylor bluefish. Larger croaker are still available within the tributary rivers. Kendall Osborne, outdoor writer, reports that he found some good hardhead pullage while fishing with his kids at the Lafayette River this week. They had three fish that went over 2-pounds using Bag-O-Worms Fishbites on the flood tide.

Anglers trolling off Cape Henry have hooked into a few Spanish mackerel, along with taylor bluefish. Expect this trend to improve as the waters warm.

Deep dropping ventures are still rewarding most boats with coolers full of blueline tilefish and black seabass, although CAPT Jake Hiles, skipper of the MATADOR, observes most catches of bluelines are of the smaller variety right now. If you venture to the deep, you may also have a chance at a golden tile, grouper, or even a mako shark. Several makos were hooked and boated lately.

Offshore, the fishing continues to deliver. The good season introduction is fulminating positive prospects about the offshore trend for the year. Decent catches of nice yellowfin tuna and gaffer dolphin were accented by a whirlwind of billfish activity near the Triple Zeros this week, where several blue and white marlin were released. Michael Hall of Virginia Beach also landed a nice 38-pound dolphin while trolling at the Cigar this week. For more information, go to www.drjball.com.

Virginia Middle Bay

Staff at Jett's Hardware reports that fishing is picking up. Anglers are catching bluefish, although the big ones haven't shown up yet. Croaker catches are good sizes—croaker can be found from Fleets Bay to Maryland. Striped bass are looking good on the channel edges and reefs. In Virginia, there has been a lot of trolling for striped bass, while in Maryland, most anglers are chumming. There have been only a few reports of spot and trout in the area, staff reports that those fish are on their way soon!

Keeper flounder have been found near the jetties, according to staff at Smith Point Marina. Croaker and spot are active in the shallow water as well. To the north, striped bass are caught by those chumming, and some have been found at the Reedville reef.

There are plenty of fish, but few fishermen at Locklies Marina! Gas prices are keeping many boats from launching. Those that venture out are finding plenty of croaker, with a few keeper flounder at White Stone Bridge. A few small spot and keeper-sized grey trout have also been hooked.

At Garrett's Marina, croaker are biting very well. Large ones are starting to show this week. Other than the croaker, the standard fish for the area—catfish—are biting as expected.

Captain Jim Thompson of Deltaville reports coolers filled with croaker up to 18 inches last Sunday. The range light on the Eastern Shore was the place to be as the Rappahannock and Piankatank Rivers are producing only small croaker and spot. The Cell is producing only a few flounder, but there are some snapper blues and a few sea mullet to be found. Very few boats are fishing as the fuel prices are keeping them at home.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, contributed the following:

Croaker are biting well in the open bay and in the creeks, but the flounder bite has been slow over the past week. Spadefish are rumored to have been caught at the Cell and at Wolftrap, but none have been weighed in at the store or at Gwynn Island Boatel yet. Speckled trout fishing continues to be hot! We registered six more citation specks this week, five from the North River and one from the Piankatank River.

Virginia Beach

Staff at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center reports offshore fishing is producing great yellowfin tuna and dolphin fishing. Fishing for yellowfin tuna is meeting the limit, with sizes ranging from 20 to 50 pounds. A dolphin citation was issued over the week for a 36-pound catch. Inshore fishing is seeing great action with black and red drum, striped bass, croaker, and spadefish. Numerous bluefish and flounder are populating the inlet.

Croaker fishing in the Chesapeake Bay continues to be successful near Fisherman's Wharf Marina. Offshore, yellowfin tuna and dolphin are red hot. The marina has also heard reports of spade fish at the tower.

Virginia Piers

At the Ocean View Pier, croaker and kingfish fishing are a hit during the day, while striped bass is the bull's eye at night.

Kingfish and croaker are the popular catches at the Lynnhaven Pier, while spot and flounder are still producing some nice catches. Anglers are also having luck with taylor bluefish. Staff reports that the fishing is picking up nicely for the area.

At the Virginia Beach Pier, anglers are targeting for skates. Plenty of kingfish has been landed over the week, and some anglers are having luck with Spanish mackerel.

Outer Banks, NC

Water temperatures and fishing success continued to fluctuate during the past week. Water temperatures were in the lower 60s and the fishing has been moderate to good when the weather has cooperated.

In the Nag's Head area, offshore anglers continue to have success with tuna, yellowfin and blackfin, along with some nice dolphin, in the 30- to 40-pound range. Wahoo, little tunny, amberjack, bonito, and sharks are also being seen. Billfish catches have been improving as well. People fishing closer to shore (within 1 to 2 miles) are finding striped bass and red drum.

Avalon Pier catches were dominated by bluefish last week. The bait of choice has been the Gotcha Plugs. No particular time of day has been more productive than another. Cobia are also being caught after sunset.

Offshore fishing out of Oregon Inlet is producing gaffer-size dolphin with yellowfin tuna and a few big eye tuna. Four white marlin, seven blue marlin, and two sailfish made up the billfish catches for the weekend. King mackerel were working closer to shore as well as tilefish, sailfish, amberjack, and black sea bass.

Inshore anglers are finding bluefish, weakfish, and speckled trout. The speckled trout have been running up to 4 pounds—the best times are early in the morning and again at sunset, and the Melvin Daniels Bridge is a hot spot. Legal-sized flounder (19 inches or greater) also are being caught by anglers drifting in the inlet.

South of Oregon Inlet, the surf fishing has been impressive for the past week. Bluefish and citation sized sea mullet can be found up and down the shoreline with gravid sand fleas producing the best results. Spanish mackerel are being caught in the mornings on spoons and speckled trout are being seen around the jetties. Cobia made a good showing Saturday evening with 6 being reported but probably more than that actually being landed. The drum have been absent but the weather conditions are right and everyone expects them to show up again soon.

From Hatteras, offshore reports include blue marlin and gaffer dolphin being caught further offshore while king mackerel, amberjack, and wahoo are showing up closer to shore. Inshore fishing has seen good cobia action and some Spanish mackerel and bluefish thrown in as well.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.












Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.

**THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
WANTS YOUR FISH....
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You catch it, you fillet it,
**but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.**



The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA		RED DRUM	
SHEEPSHEAD		BLACK DRUM	
SPADEFISH		TAUTOG	
TILEFISH		GROUPE	
KING MACKEREL		SPANISH MACKEREL	
BLUEFISH (OVER 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)			

In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a **ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT FOR EACH PARTICIPANT, PER MONTH.**

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

Bell Isle Marine (Hampton)

Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)

Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)

Wachapreague Marina

Morningstar Marina – Gwynn's Island (formerly known as the Gwynn's Island Boatel)



Website: http://mrc.virginia.gov/rec_assessment/index.shtm

As of 05/16/2008



ATTENTION: VIRGINIA SALTWATER JOURNAL WEBSITE HAS BEEN UPDATED!

You will now be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released. Staff has updated the website to include this expanded tool, so on those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the 50 caught and a range of lengths. But remember, for more high profile species, such as Red Drum, Striped Bass, and Flounder (to name a few), individual measurements on caught and released fish places a greater value on the data you are providing.

WWW.VASALTWATERJOURNAL.COM

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Virginia Marine Resour... mafmc.htm SAFMC New Site > Ho... NOAA Home Page Atlantic States Marine ... Striped Bass Charter B... CFLS Virginia Marine Resou... Recreational Fishing O... Welcome to ACCSP

Identification of **launch site** will allow fishery managers to evaluate and update the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) site register and thereby improve the data collected by the angler interviews.

Weather:

Seas:

Wind Speed:

Wind Direction:

Time of Day:

Moon Phase:

Air Temp (F):

Water Temp (F):

Number of Anglers Reporting For:

Hours Fished:

Notes:

To record your fish, click the "Add Fish" button below for each fish you intend to record. Record lengths in decimal format for partial inches (ex. 33.25). Total length is measured in a straightline from tip of nose to tip of tail. If you would like to make your catch data available to other anglers, ensure 'Make Public' is checked. To make your catch information only accessible to you(private), uncheck 'Make Public'. All catch data, both public and private, will be analyzed in aggregate by the VMRC and will never be associated with the individual angler.

Record Your Catch

*** Required Fields: Species, Qty, Length (Minimum length for released fish), Catch**

You may enter a size range for released fish. The minimum length is required. For kept fish, the length is required.

(1) Kept Fish

*Species: *Qty: *Length(inches): Weight(lb):

Method: Bait: Tide: ☒ Make Public

(2) Released Fish

*Species: *Qty: Enter Length Range *Min Length(inches): Max Length(inches):

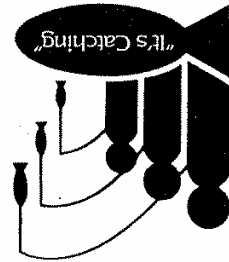
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